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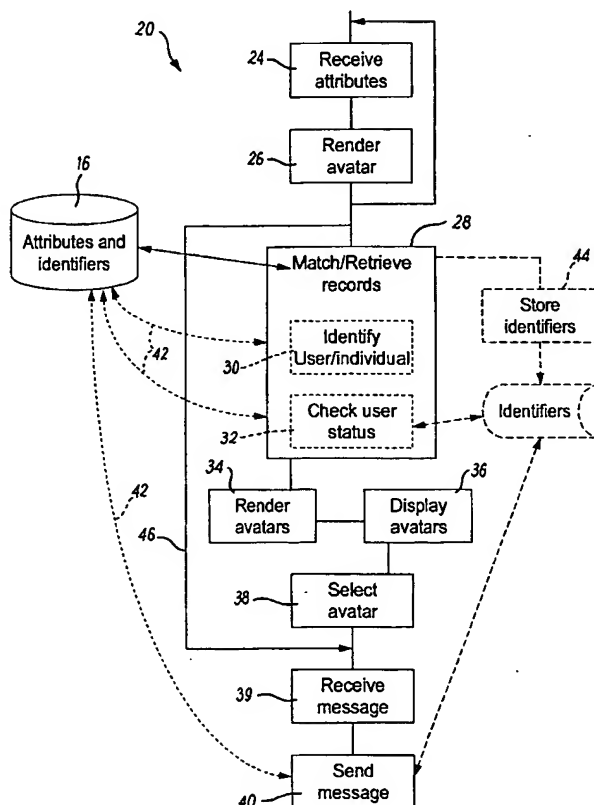
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(54) Title: **IMPROVED COMMUNICATION USING AVATARS**



(57) Abstract: A messaging method is described in which avatars, representative of attributes of users and individuals, are used for capturing information and/or selecting users or individuals. In one embodiment, an avatar is rendered in response to attributes input by a user, and a matching and retrieval selects records from a database. Avatars are rendered in accordance with the attributes in the records. The user selects an avatar, and is able to communicate anonymously with the individual. Methods and systems for capturing data using avatars and selecting individuals using avatars are also described.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

INSPEC, EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 880 731 A (LILES CHRISTOPHER A ET AL) 9 March 1999 (1999-03-09) abstract column 1, line 66 -column 4, line 13 column 6, line 20 -column 6, line 49 figure 12	1-46
X	KURLANDER D ET AL: "Comic Chat graphical chat program" COMPUTER GRAPHICS PROCEEDINGS. SIGGRAPH '96, PROCEEDINGS OF 23RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMPUTER GRAPHICS AND INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES (SIGGRAPH'96), NEW ORLEANS, LA, USA, 4-9 AUG. 1996, pages 225-236, XP002272622 1996, New York, NY, USA, ACM, USA ISBN: 0-89791-746-4 the whole document	1-7, 14-17, 26-28, 34-39

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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	FUKUDA K ET AL: "HYPERMEDIA PERSONAL COMPUTER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM: FUJITSU HABITAT" FUJITSU-SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL JOURNAL, FUJITSU LIMITED. KAWASAKI, JP, vol. 26, no. 3, 1 October 1990 (1990-10-01), pages 197-206, XP000178534 ISSN: 0016-2523 the whole document	1-46

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